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A recording is included with this book. This audio can make learning with the book easier and more enjoyable. The symbol shown at the left appears next to every example that is on the recording. Use the recording to help ensure that you're capturing the feel of the examples, interpreting the rhythms correctly, and so on. The track number below the symbol corresponds directly to the example you want to hear. Track 1 will help you tune your guitar to this audio.

Chapter 1

FLAMENCO FORMS AND RASGUEADO



RASGUEADO

Flamenco strumming technique is called *rasgueado*. A remarkable variety of *rasgueado* techniques are applied to flamenco rhythms—and the resulting sound can be electrifying. To most guitarists, expertly played *rasgueado* sounds like almost impossible virtuosity, but the technique can be broken down into basic movements, which can be learned through patient practice.

Rasgueado strokes are played by extensor muscles (the muscles that extend the fingers). Outside of flamenco, these muscles are rarely used in guitar playing. Their strength and agility must be developed carefully over time. It takes about one year of intelligent practice to master basic *rasgueado* techniques.

One of the biggest mistakes a flamenco student can make is to equate excessive force with the fire they hear in great *rasgueado* playing. Flamenco masters play *rasgueado* effortlessly. The fire comes from their expression.

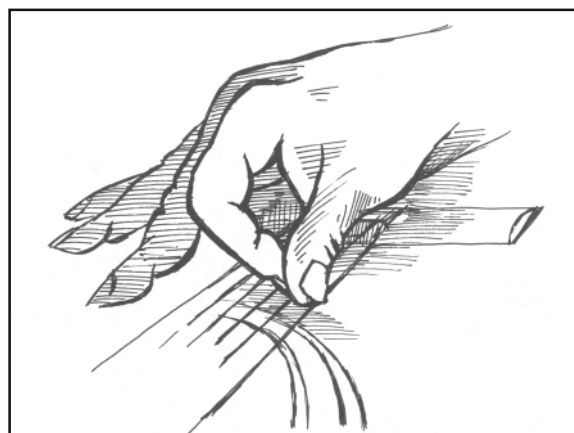
Never strain or use excessive force when playing *rasgueado* technique. Great *rasgueado* is played by relaxed hands using free unrestrained motions learned through patient practice—not by brute force!

Right-Hand Fingers

Thumb *p*
 Index *i*
 Middle *m*
 Ring *a*
 Little (pinky) .. *e*

LESSON 1—RASGUEADO WITH *i*

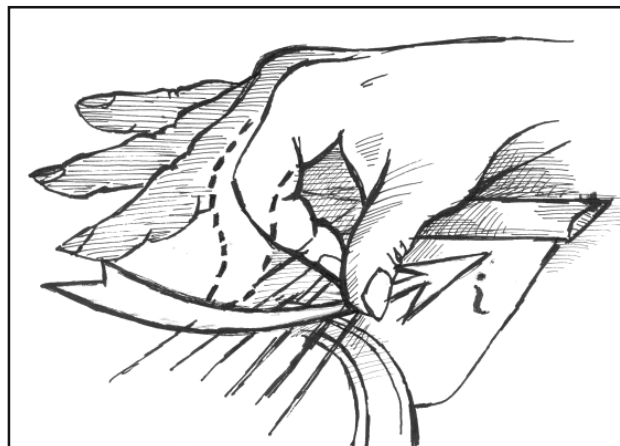
In flamenco playing, the rhythm is often marked by downstrokes and upstrokes of the index finger (*i*), which uses a free, swinging motion from the large knuckle joint (the joint that connects the finger to the hand). This technique is performed from a steady and comfortable hand position in which the thumb (*p*) rests on the 6th string to balance and support the hand. When *i* alone plays *rasgueado* strokes, the little (*e*), ring (*a*), and middle (*m*) fingers remain passively extended and are never curled into the palm.



Starting position: *i* is folded in toward the palm; *e*, *a*, and *m* are extended passively.



1. Downstroke: *i* extends fully with a free, swinging motion.



2. Upstroke: *i* returns to its starting position, brushing (not hooking) the strings.

As in example 9, the use of slurred ornaments adds authenticity and character to the compás sequence in example 10. You'll notice that three of the compáses in this example end with arpeggio figures instead of rasgueado on the 10th, 11th and 12th beats. This typical manner of ending a compás is called the *remate*, which literally means “re-kill,” a rather gruesome term borrowed from bullfighting. Each flamenco form has its own distinctive remate that is its signature.

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